

Leviticus Chapters 19 and 20 (Parshat Kedoshim)  
*English version to be sung to the Torah tropes by Len Fellman*

- 19:1 Then spoke YHWH, to Moses, saying,  
2 [You must speak] [to the whole community]—[*B'nei Yisrael*], and say to them: “Holy [must you be],  
because [indeed holy] [am I], YHWH your God.  
3 [Each person] [must to his mother] [and to his father] [show respect], [and My sabbaths] observe. I am YHWH your God.  
4 [Do not turn] [to worthless gods]. And gods [cast in metal], do not make for yourselves, I am YHWH your God.  
5 [If you should decide] [to offer up] a sacrifice of well-being to YHWH [so as to be accepted on your behalf]: [you must make it].  
6 [On the very day] [that you sacrifice it], [you must eat it]; [or on the next day]. [What is left] on [the third day] [must in fire] be burned.  
7 [But if in fact] any at all should be eaten, on [the third day], tainted meat it turned into; it is not accepted.  
8 [Those who eat it]—their guilt [they must bear]: what is holy to YHWH [he has profaned].  
[He will be cut off]—the person who did this—[from his people].  
9 [When you reap] the harvest [of your land], [you must] [not finish off] the edge (*peah*) of your field, in your reaping.  
[The gleanings of your harvest] you must not gather.  
10 Your vineyard [you must not] glean. Individual grapes of your vineyard, [you must not] pick up.  
For the poor and for the stranger [you must leave them]. I am YHWH your God.  
11 You must not steal. You must not deceive, nor may one deal falsely—a man to his fellow.  
12 Do not swear by My name with falsehood, [thereby profaning] the name of your God. I am YHWH.  
13 Do not defraud your neighbor. Do not commit robbery. [Don't keep overnight] the wages [of the hired man] with you, [until morning].  
14 Do not curse the deaf. Before the blind, do not put [a stumbling block]. [end aliyah] You must fear your God. I am YHWH.  
15 Do not commit a perversion of justice. Don't favor [the face of a poor person], and don't favor the face [of a big person].  
Evenhandedly you must judge your fellow.  
16 Don't traffic in slander among your people. Don't stand by, at the blood of your neighbor. I am YHWH.

19:17 Don't hate your brother in your heart, but rather [reprove openly] your fellow—so that you not bear—on his account—sin.  
 18 [Don't take vengeance] [or bear a grudge] against members of your kinfolk. Rather love your neighbor as yourself. I am YHWH.  
 19 [My laws—My *chukkotai*]<sup>~</sup>—you must observe. [As for your livestock]: [don't let them breed] [in different kinds].  
 Your field: don't sow with two kinds. A garment of two kinds—a *shatnez*—you must not place upon yourself.  
 20 [If there should be a man] who lies with a woman [with emission of seed], and she is a handmaid [who had been promised] to a man;  
 [and as for her redemption], she has not been ransomed, or her freedom [has not been] [given her],  
 reparation [will be supplied]. They will not be put to death, for she has not been freed.  
 21 [He must bring] [his guilt offering] (*asham*) [before YHWH] at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting: a ram of *asham*.  
 22 [And atonement] will be made over him by the priest [with the ram] of *asham* before YHWH for the offense which he has committed.  
 [It will be] [forgiven him]<sup>~</sup>—[end aliyah] the offense that he has committed.  
 23 [And when you come] [to the land], and you plant [any kind of tree] for eating, treat as uncircumcised foreskin—its fruit.  
 For [a full three years] it [will be for you] as a foreskin. You must not eat it.  
 24 And in [the fourth year] will be [all its fruit] consecrated in a feast of praise to YHWH.  
 25 And [in the fifth year] you may eat its fruit, to increase for you its yield. I am YHWH your God.  
 26 You must not eat [over\* the blood]. Do not practice divination, and do not interpret omens. \*cf. Robert Alter  
 27 [Do not] [round off] [the side-growth] (*peah*) of your head, [and do not] [shave off]—to disfigure—the side-growth of your beard.  
 28 A gash—[to mourn for a person]<sup>~</sup>—[you must not] make [on your flesh]. Inscribing a tattoo, you must not do to yourself. I am YHWH.  
 29 Do not degrade your daughter, [and make her a harlot], [so as not to prostitute] the land, and filled be the land with depravity.  
 30 My sabbaths [you must observe], [and my sanctuary] [you must revere]. I am YHWH.  
 31 [Do not turn] to ghosts [or familiar spirits]. [Do not inquire] [to become unclean] (*tamei*) by them. I am YHWH your God.  
 32 Before [one with gray hair] [you shall rise]. [You must honor] the face of the elderly. [end aliyah] Be in awe of your God. I am YHWH.  
 33 [If there should come] [to dwell with you] a stranger in your land, let there be no mistreatment of him.  
 34 [Like a native]<sup>~</sup>—[like one born among you]<sup>~</sup>—shall be to you [the foreigner who comes] | to dwell [in your midst].  
 [You must love] him [like yourselves], since strangers you were in the land of Egypt. I am YHWH.

19:35 You shall do no injustice in judgment: [in measurement], [whether in weight] or in volume.

36 [Scales you must use] that are honest, [and weights that are honest]. Your *ephah* (dry measure) [must be honest].

A *hin* (liquid measure) that is honest, [must there be] with you. I am YHWH your God, Who brought you out from the land of Egypt.

37 [You must keep] all my statutes [and all my laws]; you must practice them. [end aliyah] I am YHWH.

20:1 Then spoke YHWH to Moses, saying,

2 [You must speak] [to the children of Israel], as follows: Any person whatsoever—from the children of Israel [or from the aliens] | [who sojourn] [in Israel]—who [gives of his seed]—[any of his children]—to Molekh, must be [put to death].

[The people of the land] (the *am ha aretz*) must pelt him with stones.

3 [And as for Me], I will set My face against that man, and cut him off from the midst of his people, since of his seed he has given to Molekh, [with the result] [of making *tamei*] (unclean) My sanctuary, and of profaning My holy name.

4 [If they should in any way] [avert their eyes]: [if they should hide]—the *am ha aretz*—their eyes from that man, when he gives of his seed to Molekh, so as not to put him to death,

5 [I will surely do this]: [I Myself] [will set My face] against that man and his family.

[I will cut him off]—[as well as all who go] | whoring [after him] [in going astray] after Molekh—they are cut off from among their people.

6 [As for the *nefesh*] (person) who [turns his face] to ghosts [or to familiar spirits], to whore [after them], [I will set] My face [against that *nefesh*]—[rejecting him], and will cut him off from the midst of his people.

7 [You must sanctify yourselves]—you must be holy, [end aliyah] [because indeed], [end aliyah] I am YHWH, your God.

8 You shall observe my statutes and carry them out. I am YHWH, [who make you holy].

9 If there [be any person] who [should vilify] [either his father] or his mother, he is doomed\* to die, [because his own father] [or even his mother] he has vilified; there is bloodguilt upon him. \*According to Robert Alter

10 [If there be a man] [who commits] adultery (*yin 'af*) with the wife [of a man]—this being *na 'af* with the wife of his neighbor, then doomed to die are the *no 'ef* and the *no 'afet*.

11 [If there be a man] who should lie with the wife of his father, the nakedness of his father he has exposed.

[Doomed to die are the two of them]. Their bloodguilt is upon them.

20:12 [If there be a man] who should lie [with his daughter-in-law], then doomed to die [are the two of them].

A perversion they have committed; their bloodguilt is upon them.

13 [If there be a man] who lies with a man [as one lies] with a woman, something loathesome was done [by them both].

They are doomed to die. Their bloodguilt is upon them.

14 [If there be a man] who [takes a woman] [for himself as a wife], [and takes also her mother]—[a depraved thing] it is.

[They are subject to the fire]: [Burned must be] the man [as well as the women], that there be no depravity in your midst.

15 [If there be a man] who [is found to produce] [an emission of seed] [into an animal], he must be [put to death], and the animal [you must slay].

16 [If there be a woman] [who approaches] any beast to couple [with it], you must slay the woman and the beast.

They must be put to death; their bloodguilt is upon them.

17 A man who should take [his own sister to wife]—[daughter of his father] [or the daughter of his mother]—and he sees her nakedness,

and she [sees also] [his nakedness]: shameful it is, [and they will be cut off] [before the eyes] [of their own] kinfolk,

[since it is the nakedness] [of his own sister] [that he has uncovered]. His guilt he must bear.

18 [Now if there be a man] who lies with a woman [in her infirmity], exposing her nakedness: her flow [he has laid bare].

[And as for her], [she has uncovered] the flow of her blood. Cut off will be the two of them, from their people.

19 The nakedness [of the sister] [of your mother] or the sister of your father, you must not [lay bare].

[Because in fact], [it is his own flesh] [that he has exposed]. His guilt he must bear.

20 [If there be a man] who should lie with his aunt: the nakedness of his uncle he has uncovered.

Their guilt they shall bear. Barren they shall die.

21 [If there be a man] who [takes for himself] the wife of his brother, repulsive\* it is.

\*According to Robert Alter

The nakedness [of his brother] [he has exposed]. Without child they shall be.

22 [You shall keep] [all My statutes] [and all My laws], and practice them,

[that not spewed out] [will you be] [by the land]—of which I Myself [am intending] [to bring you] [end aliyah] there, to dwell within it.

23 [You must not] follow the customs of the nation that I am sending away before you,

since [all these things] [they have done], and I [abhorred them].

20:24 And so [I say this to you]:[it is in fact you] [who will possess] [their land].[And as for Me],[I will give it] to you, [that you may] [inherit it],  
 [this being a land] flowing with milk and honey. I am YHWH your God, Who has set you apart from the peoples.  
 25 [And you shall separate] the beasts that are clean from those *tamei*, the birds *tamei*, [from those clean], so as not to defile your *nefesh*  
 through beasts [or through birds] [or by creatures] that crawl [on the ground], which I have set apart from you, as *tamei*.  
 26 [You shall be] [to Me] holy, since holy am I: YHWH. [Indeed, I] [have set you apart] from the nations. You belong to Me.  
 27 A man [or a woman] who has [within them] [mediums or ghosts] or familiar spirits, is doomed to die.  
 [They must be stoned]. [end aliyah] They must be pelted. Their bloodguilt is upon them.

## Len Fellman's English readings with tropes

The purpose of this project is to translate *THE SONG OF THE TORAH* into English.

I work by comparing as many as ten English translations of a *pasuk* and creating a cantillated English sentence that sounds as much as possible like the Hebrew. They follow the Hebrew as closely as possible, word for word and trope by trope. The English language has an amazing flexibility, making it possible to make the English word order match that of the Hebrew quite well, allowing for some “poetic licence”, and some willingness on the part of the listener to be “carried” by the melody more than by the English syntax. The translation needs to sound good when *chanted*, but not necessarily when *spoken or read*.

Unlike most translations, these “transtropilations” are not intended to be a substitute for the Hebrew. On the contrary, they are meant to provide a “window” into the Hebrew text and its musical expression. My ideal listener knows enough Hebrew and has enough interest to follow the Hebrew in a bilingual text while the *leyner* is chanting the English version, to bring the Hebrew text to life, both *verbally* and *musically*. For this purpose I use *exactly* the same tropes in the English as in the Hebrew (almost always on the corresponding English word).

The texts can be used to do **consecutive translation**, i.e. leyning a phrase in Hebrew, followed by the corresponding phrase sung in English. Some of my recordings demonstrate this. I do this frequently when leyning for groups that either know little Hebrew, or that don't have a *chumash* in front of them.

I favor literal translations (e.g. “cut a covenant”) to call attention to Hebrew idioms, and towards simpler (even if less accurate) words (e.g. Ex. 12:7 “beam above the door” rather than “lintel”) to be easier to follow. If my readings provoke a discussion of the Hebrew, I consider that as justification for using less-than-idiomatic English. I try to find just the right balance between “literalness” and “listenable-ness”. A primary goal is throwing light on the Hebrew syntax.

In order to adapt the trope symbols to a left-to-right language like English, I *reversed* the direction of the trope symbols:

mercha tipcha munach tevir mapakh *or* yetiv kadma *or* pashta geresh gershayim telisha katana telisha gedola

(Generally speaking the *conjunctive tropes* such as mercha, munach, mapakh, kadma, and telisha katana “lean toward” the words they “conjoin” to, while the *disjunctive tropes* such as tipcha, geresh, gershayim, and telisha gedola “lean away” from the words that follow, so as to create a sense of separation.)

The trope symbol is normally placed under the accented syllable, unless it is a *pre-positive* accent (telisha gedola, placed *at the beginning* of the word or phrase) or a *post-positive* one (telisha katana or pashta, placed at the *end* of the word or phrase).

The Hebrew text frequently puts a *makkeph* (which is like a hyphen) between words in order to treat them as a single word to be chanted. I use a different system for English: If an entire English phrase is to be chanted to a single trope melody, I place it between grey brackets, as in this phrase from the Book of Lamentations:

[clings to her skirts]

The *leyner* is invited to fit this phrase to the *Eicha* “rivi'i” melody in whatever way seems most natural.

As a variant of the “grey bracket” device, I indicate the following pairs of tropes by “wrapping them around” the phrase which will have the combined melody:

mercha/tipcha	kadma/geresh ( <i>or</i> : azla, etc.)	mercha siluk
(Renew our days)	(She weeps bitterly).	(a fire-offering to God)

Again, the *leyner* should decide on the most natural way to fit the phrase to the combined trope melody.

I put words in gray which I consider essential but which don’t strictly match the Hebrew. I also “pad” some phrases with extra words in gray to fill out a musical phrase nicely. Different trope systems vary widely in the length of the musical phrase used, so the words in gray may or not be used depending on the *leyner*’s cantillation system. In particular, the tropes *telisha g’dola* (ר), *legarmeh*, *metigah-zakef*, and *pazer* vary widely in the musical phrases used for chanting. (And please indulge me in my whimsical treatments of *shalsholet*.)

“*Metigah-zakef*” is a special trope combination which can be recognized by a kadma and a zakef katon appearing on the same Hebrew word (again, a *makkeph* makes two words into one). (There are several examples in Genesis 18 & 19, beginning with 18:16). I indicate this by placing the corresponding English phrase in grey brackets:

[Take heed—take care for yourself]

In some trope systems (notably cantor Moshe Haschel in “Navigating the Bible II”) this is given a very distinctive melody—for which purpose extra syllables fill out the musical phrase (as in “take care” in this example). Haschel’s system also chants the trope *munach* as *legarmeh* more often than other systems do.

I don’t write a single word of translation without first hearing the melody of the phrase in my mind, following one of two trope systems: The one by Portnoy and Wolff (*The Art of Cantillation*) or the one by Joshua R. Jacobson (*Chanting the Hebrew Bible*).

I transcribe the name יהוה as YHWH (in small caps). I almost always chant this as *yud-hey-vav-hey*, which I have discovered fits marvelously into several of the trope melodies. But of course the *leyner* can choose to pronounce it as “*God*” or “*Adonai*”.

*The English translations I mostly use (besides several scholarly commentaries) are the following:*

Aryeh Kaplan, ‘The Living Torah’ (1981) (also my source for proper names & transliterations)  
 Richard Elliott Friedman, ‘The Bible With Sources Revealed’ (2003)  
 Everett Fox, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (1997)  
 The Stone Edition ‘Tanach’ (1996)  
 JPS ‘Hebrew-English Tanach’, (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. 2000), *along with* Orlinsky, ‘Notes on the New Translation of the Torah’ (1969)  
 Robert Alter, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (2004)  
 Commentaries in the ‘Anchor Bible’ series  
 Rotherham, The Emphasized Bible (1902)  
 The Jerusalem Bible (1966) (also my source for topic headings)  
 The New King James Bible (1982)